

AWARD OF PURPLE HEART DECORATIONS
MEADOWRIDGE MEMORIAL PARK

April 19, 1942

Dorsey

THE ceremonies here today, in which a grateful Government and people pay tribute to the courage and devotion of outstanding military heroes of World War No. I, will find an echo in the hearts of every loyal American.

The truest test of patriotism is willingness to fight, and die if need be for the security of the Nation and the safety of its people. In honoring these twenty Maryland veterans of the first war with the Purple Heart award, you are honoring all who serve today in world-wide battle areas. For every soldier who offers himself valiantly is a potential recipient of the decoration being accorded here today.

No honor can be too great, no praise too lavish, for the thousands of our men, and our women, who went forth to save Democracy in 1917-1918, or who today are fighting the battle of decency throughout the world. The AEF in that first great struggle, set a standard of fighting performance that will be an inspiration to their sons and successors in this new conflict that has engulfed the world.

High station in life entails great responsibilities. America's prestige among the nations of the world makes it her duty to assume leadership in the bitter fight between the forces of slavery, and those who would preserve for the peoples of all the world the rights and freedoms guaranteed to us under the Constitution of our Country.

The issue has been put squarely up to this Country. So great have been the successes of the brutal Axis armies that it is apparent to all that no free peoples could survive without the active and all-out assistance of this Nation. The future of humanity is in America's care—it is in the hands of our gallant airmen and Navy and ground forces, and of the nurses and doctors and supply forces that are working so splendidly to keep them fighting and flying. It is in the hands, too, of every American working man and woman who is aiding in the production of war material.

All credit to the men who are bearing the brunt of our fighting in this war, so fittingly represented by these wounded veterans of the other World War. Our people salute them, and assure them that while they are fighting the good fight of Democracy and humanity, we here at home are seeking, by work and sacrifice, to be worthy of the privileges they are fighting to maintain for us.

We will guard the home front. It will be our patriotic duty to assure continued, increasing production of planes and tanks and ships and guns; we will be on the alert to prevent sabotage or internal hostile acts that might destroy morale; we will give according to, and beyond our financial ability, to see